

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

June 2, 1980

MEMORANDUM

~~CONFIDENTIAL (WITH SECRET ATTACHMENT)~~

TO: See Distribution

FROM: ARA/SC - Claus W. Ruser (A)

SUBJECT: Results of Inter-Agency Group Meeting

Attached is a proposed memorandum describing the results of the May 19 Inter-Agency Group Meeting on Argentina. Request your agency or bureau clearance be provided to this office no later than COB June 4.

In order for us to respond to the Policy Review Committee's directive to consider steps over the longer term further to strengthen ties with Argentina, please provide to ARA/SC by June 13 a list of issues and initiatives that should be addressed in 1981, together with thoughts for resolution and implementation.

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GDS 6/2/86

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D R A F T

~~SECRET~~ (Entire Text)

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

From: Warren D. Christopher

Subject: Steps to Improve U.S.-Argentine
Relations

- Pursuant to your instructions, the Inter-Agency Group for the American Republics has prepared a plan of action for 1980, which I am submitting for your approval.

I. OBJECTIVES

Our principal objective will be improve our relationships so as to foster Argentina's identification with the West; to seek assistance on appropriate East-West issues (e.g. grains); to foster increased sensitivity among Argentine leaders to global nonproliferation concerns; to encourage further specific

improvement in current human rights practices (e.g. due process for all persons suspected of subversion or terrorism); and thus to contain Soviet political and economic influence. We also wish to encourage continued Argentine cooperation with the Papal Mediation of Argentina's dispute with Chile over territorial limits in the Beagle Channel, a dispute that very nearly led to war between the two countries in late 1978. Finally, we wish to encourage Argentina to play a constructive role with respect to developments in Central America and in other Hemispheric issues.

II. ACTIONS FOR 1980

1. The Consultative Process

We will continue the process of political and economic consultations begun with General Goodpaster's visit to Buenos Aires in January. We contemplate:

--A visit by the Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs to Buenos Aires, possibly about August 1.

--A meeting of the U.S.-Argentine Mixed Economic Commission in October, the U.S. delegation to be chaired by the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs.

--Periodic policy talks on global and hemispheric issues, with the first round of such talks to be held during the visit of the Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs.

2. Nuclear Relations

We want to keep open the door for such cooperation as Argentina may desire for its nuclear program, as a way to maintain influence for the longer-term. In particular, we should try to meet our commitment to provide highly and moderately enriched fuel for Argentina's research program. We should:

--Try to resolve promptly, in accordance with U.S. law, the remaining safeguards issues to permit

delivery of the research fuel and the licensing of U.S. components;

--once this is done, undertake a review of the advisability of modifying U.S. policy to facilitate greater participation by U.S. industry in Argentina's nuclear program. (The principal case currently at issue is an export license permitting the sale of a high-pressure vessel for the Atucha II power reactor.)

3. Human Rights

We would continue the dialogue on human rights with Argentine leaders, through Ambassador Castro and during the visit by the Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs. In these consultations we will attempt to obtain assurances that:

--the GOA will accept an OASGA resolution which encompasses a call for further improvements by Argentina and which maintains the integrity of the OAS Commission on Human rights;

--there be no new disappearances, (i.e., extra-legal abductions of persons suspected of association with terrorism or subversion, including persons believed to be active terrorists);

--all persons suspected of terrorism or subversive activities be processed through normal judicial channels, thus ensuring due process to such detainees; and

--there be substantial progress in advance of the OASGA, in reducing the number of political prisoners held without charges through release, trial, or exile (during his recent visit, Ambassador Smith was assured that half of these prisoners--1,300 at the time--would be released or sentenced by the end of the year).

The Inter-Agency Group noted that an accounting of the fate of disappeared persons was being addressed in UN fora, and concluded that this should not be a central requirement for improving our bilateral relationship.

4. Military Relations

We will begin to rebuild relations through increased contact and consultations, while stressing that further progress on human rights will be essential to the more fundamental improvement in relations (including a modification of the Humphrey/Kennedy amendment, as reported in the conclusions of the PRC meeting).

We plan to:

--begin periodic security consultations with Argentina; the first round, to be held this year in Buenos Aires, would focus on Soviet activities in the South Atlantic;

--invite an Argentine Armed Forces team to make a return visit to Washington later in the year to discuss global defense issues;

--invite Argentina to send a guest instructor to the U.S. Army School of the Americas. (The Executive Branch will consult with members of Congress on this initiative.)

Other issues are:

--High-Level Military Visit.

We will keep under review the desirability to proceed with an invitation to a senior Argentine military leader (such as the Commander-in-Chief of the Argentine Army or the Army Chief-of-Staff) to visit Washington this year. A final decision on this (including the question of timing) should take into account the implications of such a move on the selection of the next Argentine president now under way within the Argentine Armed Forces, as well as developments in human rights and U.S.-Argentine relations.

--Sale of P-3 Aircraft.

In DOD's view, there is a strategic need for the sale of ocean surveillance aircraft to the GOA. We see no possibility, however, to seek special legislation to permit the sale of these aircraft to Argentina this year.

5. Other Cooperative Steps

In addition, we would:

--Sign the pending U.S.-Argentine Agricultural Cooperation Agreement during the visit of the Assistant Secretary for InterAmerican Affairs;

--Seek to conclude the negotiations for the bilateral income tax treaty;

--Seek to negotiate a consular convention.

6. Consultations with Other Allies

The Inter-Agency Group also considered whether and in what form the Administration should consult our NATO allies and Japan about issues of common concern such as human rights and recent Soviet initiatives toward Argentina and other countries in the Hemisphere. We believe recent Soviet activities are a subject for the NATO experts group on Latin

America and should be addressed in that forum. Human rights are discussed by the WEO group in the appropriate UN fora, such as the UN Human Rights Commission.

A majority of the Inter-Agency Group recommended against any new bilateral approaches to our Allies on these issues.

7. Implications for U.S. Policy Toward Brazil and Chile

The Group also considered the implications for neighboring countries, especially as regards security consultations.

As a general point, the Group noted that many of these steps will merely restore a better balance in U.S. relations with the two countries since the U.S. already has a comprehensive consultative process with Brazil (including, most recently, security consultations). There was agreement that Brazil would not respond favorably to a proposal for trilateral security talks at this time.

Not addressed by the Group, but a problem of some consequence, nonetheless, is the Chilean perception that we have "tilted" toward Argentina. Chile sees our warming relationship with Argentina as being directly threatening in the context of the Beagle Channel dispute. We have attempted to persuade the Chileans that what we are doing with Argentina has nothing to do with Chile or with our position on the Beagle Channel, which is to encourage acceptance of the outcome of Papal mediation and avoid war. However, the Chileans seem to fear that the Argentines, enjoying improved relations with the U.S., and seeing Chile increasingly isolated, will be encouraged toward adventurism. This problem of an imbalance in our relationships in the Southern Cone, and of the dangers that this could pose to peace in the region, will need to be looked to in the not-too-distant future.

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